CHRIST IN THE CLOUDS, OR, GOD's coming to Judgment.

A short Treatise, very necessary in these evil and dangerous times, for all those which desire that the day of the LORD may be their day of Joy.

Mark 13. Ver. 35. 36.

Watch, for ye know not when the Master of the House will come: Whether at Evening, or at mid-night, or at the Cock-crowing, or at the Dawning; least he come suddenly and find you sleeping.

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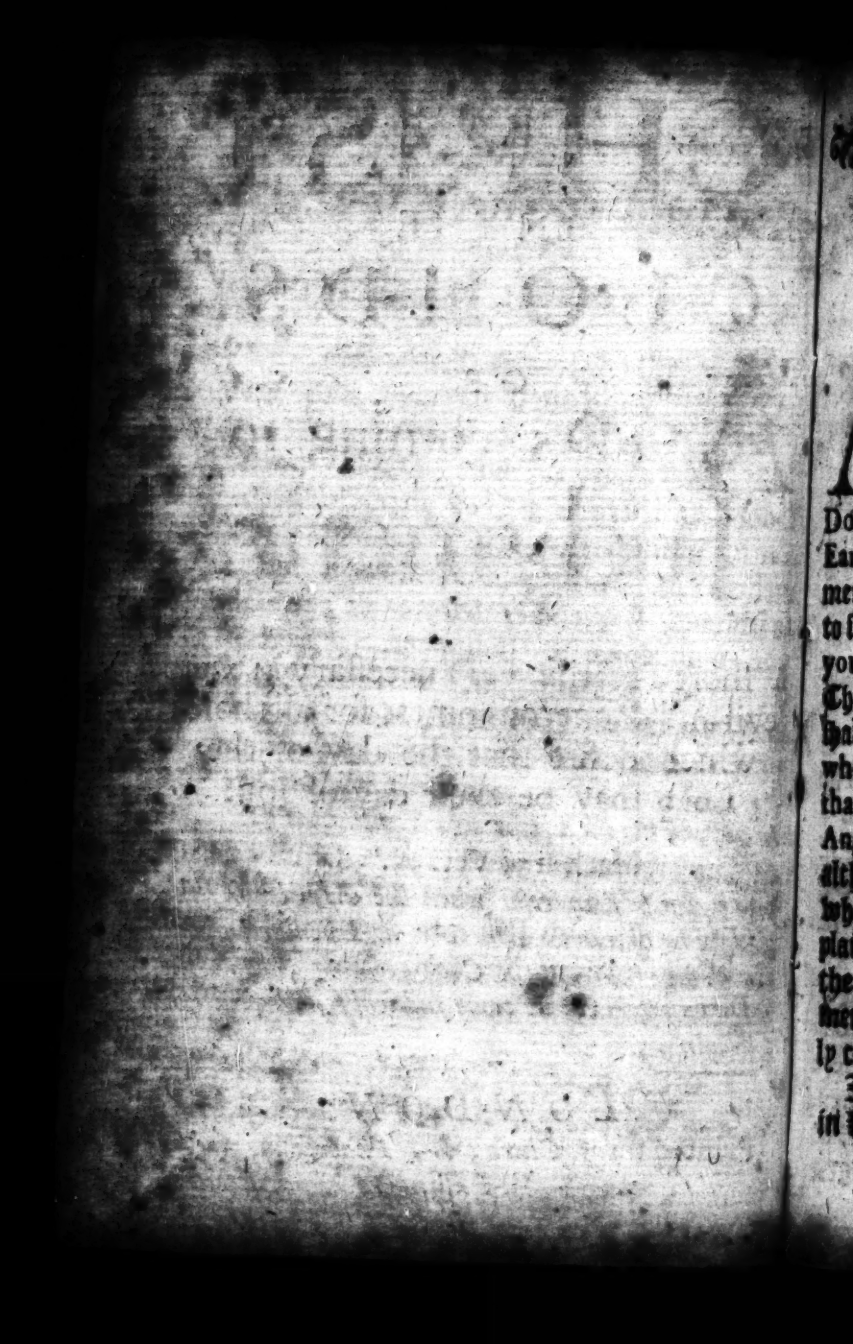

Christ in the Clouds.

OR,

God's coming to Judgment.

Atheisme and Epicurisme, are two Sins most hainous and deadly; the Atheist believes there is no God: him David confutes, Doubtless there is a God, that Judgeth the Earth. The Epicure believes there is no Judgment after Death: him Solomon doth seem to instruct, Remember that for all these things you must come to Judgment. There is no Christian, I think, but believes that there shall be a day of Judgment, Mat. 24. 30. But when this day shall come, none knows: for of that day and hour no man knoweth, neither the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only. But although no mans reach is able to determine when that Day and Hour shall be, yet may plainly be demonstrated and shown both from the Prophets and Apostles, that this Judgment day is near at hand; and will most suddenly come upon us.

It is the mercy of the Holy Ghost to men in Holy Writ, to insert these Caveats, & to put

Man in mind of the Judgment day, and that for three special causes;

1. That we may be terrified from sin.

2. That we might be admonished to the true and sincere worship of God.

3. That we might be strengthened in our Faith, lest the great *terrible day* should come upon us unawares, and so find us unprovided.

Since the foundation of the World, we know the time, when the Dissolution of the World shall be, we are altogether ignorant: yet we may justly Prophesie and Presage thus much, since Sin and Impiety is now come to that height, that it can by no succeeding Ages be aggravated, and that Vertue and Godliness are so despised & villified among impious men, that they can never hereafter be less esteemed: who cannot then perceive, or is so dull sighted, that is not able to apprehend and foresee the Dissolution to be at hand? Now is that Prophesie of Hosea verified: There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledg of God in the Land; which appeareth by the Curling, Lying, Murthers, Thefts, and Adulterers, which now abound: So that now as the Prophet Micah hath it, The Godly man is perisht from the Earth, and there is no just man among the Sons of men. Thus Hosea, Micah, nay, all the Prophets do agree

agree in one, whereupon saith St. Ambrose, When Righteous men perish from off the Face of the Earth, the Earth must needs perish also, because the godly are the Pith and Marrow of the Earth: For as the Tree without Pith and Moisture soon dryeth up, so the present World must needs decay, when the Righteous that should uphold it, are not to be found in it: For this cause, as Elay doth it, In the City is left Desolation, *and destruction is in the gates thereof, because of their manifold iniquities.*

Christ Jesus himself said, As in the Days before the Flood, they were eating, and drinking, and marrying, and giving in Marriage, till the day of the Flood came, and took them away: So also shall the Coming of the Son of Man be, by reason of the Prophaneness, and too much Security. Suppose that this Prophesie shall be fulfilled upon our present times, and that GOD will say to us as he did to Noah, I will destroy you with the World: O how unhappy and miserable shall that Man be then, that hath not GOD for his Guide! But to the end we may the better discern that we are they, upon whom the ends of the World must come, there is no better a Sign amongst those whom Christ himself gave before them this, namely: For the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be Preached in all the

World, for a Witness to all Nations, and then shall the end come: which is as much as to say, according to St. Chrysostom; To accuse and reprove those that would not believe the Gospel. The same is that of Hilary: Then the Apostles being dispersed throughout all the World, and the Gospel Preached, then shall the Fall of Jerusalem be. Nevertheless, there are both Learned and unlearned of this opinion, that since the World, so long after these Prophesies, hath continued as before, that the end is not near, and that the World shall continue still immutable. But let them persevere in their opinions; for since St. Ambrose, Cyprian, Chrysostom, and St. Gregory were of opinion, That since the Gospel in their time was Preached to all Nations, long after their time the World could not indure. Surely then it is most probable, that this is the Age in which the end must come.

Now that we have some proof that the World cannot endure long, because the Gospel is said to be preached to all Nations. Here St. Jerome, who was of opinion that there was in his time no Nation that was ignorant of the Gospel of Christ: For he saith, Although they have no Preacher, yet they cannot but hear the Opinion of the

Faith

Faith of their Neighbouring Nations.

This Prosper confirms: The part of the world is without the Gospel of Christ, those of all sorts, and of all Nations, have knowledg of Christ. I could induce a Cloud of opinions, but let Ambrose serve for them all: The Gospel is Preached, the World may be perswaded. To conclude this point, since probably by this great motive we are induced to believe that the end is at hand, and that the time and hour thereof is uncertain, it shall stir us up to a more holy course of life, least that our desolation and Confusion overtake us unawares.

But to the end that we may the better understand and believe what hath been before spoken, the Word of God is a most sure Testimony to inform us of the truth of Christs second Coming, and that this present Age is the last Age of the World; For the Spirit expressly saith, 1 *Tim.* 4. That in the later end some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and Doctrine of Devils, speaking Lyes in Hypocrisie, and having their Conscience seared with a hot Iron, &c. And again, know this also: that in the last dayes perilous times shall come; for men shall be Lovers of their own selves, Covetous Boasters, Proud Blasphemers, disobedient to Parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural

affection, truth-breakers, false-accusers, Incontinent, despisers of those that are good, High-minded, Lovers of Pleasure more than God, having the form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof. Thus far the Apostle; which words St. Cyprian handling, saith, All things that were foretold are fulfilled, and the end of the world draweth near; the Prophesies are come to pass, both in respect of the men and the minds; For now (if ever) is the perfection, or rather imperfection of all the sins the Apostle names to be the fore-runners of the end. Why doubt we then, that the end is not at hand? Or why fear we not rather, that a sudden end will prevent our procrastinated repentance? As bodies are sick before death, and as Infirmities, and Sickness are the true fore-runners of a separation between the Body and the Soul: even so fareth it with the World, it now languisheth and is corrupt, it now lies sick, and therefore it must needs come to Confusion, and to an end. For deadly sickness is a fore-runner of death; all things now suffer their defect, and let no man wonder at it; for man is now born in such defect, in respect of the birth of man in former times: but what is wanting in the present condition of mans Body, is supplyed in the faculties of mind, and what is

defective

active in the strength of his Members, is
compleat in the ripeness of his understanding,
which is for the most part imployed not in lite-
ral, but in devilish Arts, not in the study of
Learning, but in pleasure. Only Wit and
Subtilty is resident in Man, the only Idea,
and representment of the Image of God in
Man. What can we otherwise but think
that the Time is at hand, wherein Mortality
shall put on Immortality, wherein the burthen
of the flesh being laid aside the Glorious Body
of the Church shall be coupled to her Glorious
Head. The Communion of Saints shall be
consummate and Christ shall enjoy his Spouse
in continual Love and Union. In the mean
time with Paul, Unhappy men that we are,
who shall deliver us from the Body of death,
that we may pass secure to the Body of
Life.

Then let every good Christian in these
wicked times wherein destruction hangs over
our heads, with good Hezekiah Pray, Lord,
I am oppressed, do thou undertake for
me; and since the day of destruction is so neer
us, we intreat thee, since it is expedient for
us, that thou wouldest teach us, So to number
our days, that we may apply our hearts to
Wisdom. And since thou hast pronounced
that Servant happy, whom his Master when

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he came, found Vigilant and Watchful. Grant, Lord, we beseech thee, that since [illegible] manifest, that long it cannot be before [illegible] come, that we may be fitted and prepared [illegible] thy Coming, and may be found with [illegible] pure Lamps, and so in Holiness enter [illegible] Bride-Chamber with Joy; And let us, [illegible] Lord, think the day most near, least while [illegible] Day of Death or Judgment be thought to [illegible] afar off, it prevent the improvement, and while long life is expected, it quickly forsakes Wicked and Guilty persons.

Our minds are very desirous if we could to know the Day of Death and Desolation. But if we could attain to the knowledg thereof, what would it profit us? Suppose the Consummation of this World to be after Ten, Twenty, or Forty, or an Hundred years, what is this material? Is not the Term of Life the Consummation of each Man? Why then art thou so troubled about the last day of Judgment? Since as thy end leaves thee, Judgment shall find thee: And how suddenly Death shall find thee, thou art altogether ignorant; For as in other things, not regarding things pertaining to our Souls, we altogether are busied in things common; saying, this man is an Adulterer, this man a Thief, this man a false-hearted fellow, that man proud:

But

But no man hath a care for saving his own soul far worse.

So doth every man neglect his own end, he would fain learn when the general day of Dissolution shall be: Which day, whether it be near or far off, it doth nothing concern us, so each man regard his several end for since thou art Born, 'tis most certain thou must Dye: And it is certain, after Death cometh Judgment, that may be far off, yet thy last day is at hand: Therefore prepare thee for this day; For if this day find thee unprepared, the day of Judgment shall find thee so likewise, when thou shalt rue for it.

Consider this, all ye that forget God, least he tear you in pieces, and there be none to help: For our God shall go, and shall not keep silence; a Fire shall come before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him; For God himself is Judge, and the day of Judgment will quickly have an end, prevent the speed thereof: It will speedily come, prevent it I say, be thou speedily converted. And as the Prophet David admonisheth us, Let us run before the face of the Judge, with Confession of Our Faults, and true Contrition of the same; And the reason why thou knowest not his coming is, that thou mayest always be prepared for it,

it: For it is in thine own power, now thou maist expect his Comming: He therefore deferrs his Comming, that when he comes, he may not daunt thee. Behold, he is not yet come he is in Heaven, thou art on Earth. He deferrs his Comming, do not thou deferr this time of Repentance, lest thou for ever, then too late Repent thee of his Comming. For in that day it will be too late to Repent; Therefore pray not that his Kingdom come, which thou fearest coming: but rather correct thy self, that thou pray not against thy self. So dayly he calls upon thee, that he may not that day contemn thee. He that shall then be thy Judge, is now thy Advocate, and he now calls upon thee, that thou wouldst lead a Godly Life.

Let us therefore let the day of Judgment before our Eyes, which way soever we go, let us carry the Memory of it with us, and it will bring this profit with it, that we shall not only meditate on the Horror and Destruction of that day, but also with for the accomplishment of the same, which makes the Wicked to tremble when they hear it approaches. Thus S. Chrysostom saith: Let us from among our selves repeat these things and with others: There shall be a Resurrection, a day of Judgment, and a Time of Examination of our

Works,

Works, whether good or bad. And this will cause the minds both of good and bad, be not conversant in the Vanities and Pleasures of this World, and be not tempted to any Wickedness, but rather to undergo any Thing to be imposed upon them here, than to incurr the intolerable punishments of everlasting Fire hereafter.

This made David cry out: Establish my Flesh in thy fear, for I have been afraid to hear of thy Judgments. To conclude this Point, since we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that every one may Receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; and knowing the Terror and Justice of the Judge of all Men, that shall Judge the world in Righteousness; and considering the punishment that then shall be imposed on the Wicked, that shall be turned into Hell with them that forget God: Let us hear and follow St. Hillaries Advice, in all the course of our Lives: the Memory of the Last and Great Judgment, is to be planted and grafted in our hearts: For happy is the man that doth what he must do, in Remembrance of the Last day: And why? Hear the words of Jesus the Son of Sirach, Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember

ber thy end, and thou shalt never do amiss.

Thus much shall suffice, that there shall be a Day of Judgment, and that that day is near. Now somewhat remaineth to be spoken of the manner of this day, and the Terrour thereof, that the Wicked being touched with the understanding of the same, might be driven nearer to God. In that Day, saith St. *Paul*, every mans Work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by the fire, and the fire shall try every mans Work, what sort it is.

The Time is now come when Judgment shall begin at the house of GOD, and if it first begins with us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and Sinners appear? Where will they hide themselves in that terrible Day, wherein there shall be nothing but weeping and gnashing of Teeth, Howling, Lamentation and Repentance, too too late, when the Foundations of the Mountains shall be moved, and the Land be burnt with Fire? When as St. Peter saith, the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Firmament shall melt with fervent heat, the Earth also; and the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up. When as God himself said

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in the Gospel, *Mat.* 24. The Sun shall be darkned, the Moon shall not give her Light, the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers thereof shall be shaken.

Where will the Wicked then betake themselves? Where will Adulterers, Drunkards, where will Cursers, and Swearers appear? where will the Luxurious, Deceivers, Proud, unclean and filthy Persons be found? What (unhappy as they are) can they then plead for themselves, to appease the Anger of a Just Judge of Heaven and Earth? Surely nothing. Behold ye therefore, O ye wicked that forget GOD: For the day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as a Destruction from the Almighty; For the Lord shall lay the Land as desolate, and shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it: He will punish the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their iniquity; He will cause the Arrogancy of the Proud to cease, and will lay low the Haughtiness of the Ambitious Worldling. What fear, and what horror, what terrour and amazement shall there seize upon and possess those that are marked out for eternal Destruction? In the name of God let us therefore while we have time, rouze our selves up while there is time, let us repent and amend our selves, that we be never brought to these tortures of Body and

Soul:

Soul: Let us rather preferr the simplicity of the Dove, and the chastity of the Turtle: the Spiritual feathers of Graces lift up your Souls up to Heaven by your Prayers, that so we may be always ready to resign our Souls and Bodies into the hand of our Redeemer, with Joy, and Alacrity of Spirit.

But that we may the better hear & understand the terror of that day to avoid the same, we will hear the Prophets what they foretell: Gird your selves, and lament you Priests, howl ye Ministers of the Altar: lye all night in sackcloth, ye Ministers of my God, for the meat-offering, and the drink-offering is with-holden from the House of God. Alas, for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as destruction from the Almighty, shall it come. Blow a Trumpet in Zion, and sound an Alarm in the holy Mountain, let all the Inhabitants of the Land tremble: For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness: For great is the day of the Lord, and very terrible: sure the great day wherein so great a God, greatly to be praised, & to be above all gods, shall come to Judgment, & to reward all men for their doings. 'Tis a great day, after which there shall be no change of time, no course of time

shall

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shall

and desire the same. But the Prophet Amos 5. 18. doth threaten these men, saying, Woe unto you that desire the Day of the Lord, to what end is it for you? The Day of the Lord is darkness, and not light; as if a man did fly from a Lyon, and a Bear meet him, or went into the house and lie ned his hand on the Wall, and a Serpent bite him. You do saith he, very evil to your selves, in that you do rashly desire the Day of the Lord, for ye shall not walk in the light of God's countenance, because ye have not been Children of the light, but Children of darkness. There noysome darkness shall come upon you, whatsoever you shall then assay, you shall not shun Terror, you cannot abide Horror. And if you may shun the fate of the Lyon of the Tribe of Judah, that you render not account for your sins, yet that Bear the Devil, will run upon you, meet you and punish you for the same. Or if you escape this Bear and enter into the house of your conscience to consider the Evils you have committed, and the Good you have omitted, the tormenting worm will seize upon your conscience. The Worm that Elijah 66. speaketh of, The Worm shall never dye; and the Evangelist Mark, did testifie the same; The Worm dyeth not, there, Fire never goeth out, there, torments are endless.

less, Neither is there in that Day any Partiality to be used. For the Kings of the Earth, Gentlemen, Rich men, the great and chief Captains, the Mighty men, every Bond-man, and every Free, shall hide themselves in the rocks, and in the Dens of the Mountains, and shall say to the Rocks and Mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great Day of Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? But when the Son of man shall come in the Glory of his Father, and the holy Angels with him, before whom all Nations shall be gathered: he shall then separate them one from another, as the Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats, and he shall set the Sheep on his Right hand, and the Goats on the Left-hand, and the King shall say to them on the Right-hand, Matt. 25. Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdome prepared for you from the beginning of the World. But to them on the Left-hand, he shall say, Go ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. And these shall go into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal. To conclude, this point, hear the Counsel of our Saviour Christ, Luke 21. 34. Take heed, least at

any time your heart be over-charged with surfeiting and Drunkenness, and cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares. For as a Snare it shall come upon them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

Since therefore all these things are thus expected to be fulfilled, and all that read the Scriptures may hear this both from Prophets and Apostles, Nay, and Christ himself, it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. It is a wonder that since all things (as the Apostle tells) shall be dissolved, that now at length we become not pure, and walk in the holy conversation and Godliness; looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God, wherein the Heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat. 2 Per. 3. 2. It is a wonder that we do not deny all ungodliness, and worldly desires, and Lusts of the flesh, the Glory of the world, the deceitfulness of Riches, and the troubling cares of all Earthly things, and exercise our selves in all Sobriety and Godliness, looking for the blessed hope, and the Glorious appearance of

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that great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

It ought therefore, to be our first and chief care, in these dangerous and wicked Times, not being drown'd in the Imploiments of this World, to have a care of our Salvation, and to make sure the Anchor of our hope and Faith: That our Souls suffer not Eternal Shipwrack, 2 Timth. 3 5. Let us not perswade our selves that the Lord is not near, let us not lay with them that Peter reprehended, where is the promise of his coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were since the Creation; For how long those things shall continue? the Lord of Hosts by the Prophet Haggai doth declare, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens and the Earth, the Sea and the dry Land. How the Apostle Peter gives the reason why he is not yet come, 1 Pet. 3. 9. 'Tis his long-suffering (saith he) to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance. Wherefore account that the long-suffering of the Lord is Salvation, and be diligent that you may be found of him in fear, without Spot, and Blamelesse. We must be diligent and watchful: The Grecians are gone aside, we have a Simon in us that will yield the place to them: We must continually watch, and have alwaies an

Eye

Eye to the watch, holding our Weapons in our hands, unless we be minded at all times to be surprised, and yeild at the pleasure of the Enemy. For, The Day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the Night, in which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Element shall melt with fervent heat. Therefore be ye ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh. Now they that defer the coming of the Lord, and say with that Evil servant, my Lord delayeth his coming, let us Eat and Drink and be Drunken. Tell them, the Lord will come in a day when they look not for him, and in an hour when they are not awake, and will cut them asunder, and will give them their portion with the Unbelievers and Hypocrites, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Luke 12. 47.

Now they that know these things and prepare not themselves, neither do according to the will of God, shall be beaten with many stripes, as the Apostle St. Luke hath in his Gospel pronounced.

Let us endeavour therefore, that when the last day cometh, we may say with St. Paul, Tim. 4. 7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the

Faith;

faith; Hence forth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord that Righteous Judge shall give me that day; But is this Crown laid up for thee alone? (O Paul) not only for me (saith he) but also for them that love the Lord Jesus, and expect his appearance.

O that this would take some impression in the heardest of hearts, that do sing a temporal Requiem here unto their Souls, least while they think the Day of the Lord is farthest from them, it on the suddain come unto them, and so they be found in a condition too late to be amended, and by no means whatsoever to be avoided.

To conclude all, gird up the Loyns of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end; For the Glory that is to be brought to you, at the Revelation of Jesus Christ as obedient Children, not walking after your former lusts of Ignorance; Let your Loyns I say be girded, and your lights burning, and you your selves like unto them that wait for the Lord when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, you may open immediately. Luke 12. 36. Blessed is the Servant whom his Master when he cometh finds so doing; Of a truth I say unto you, he will make him Ruler over all he hath. Take ye

heed,

hood, Watch and Pray, for ye know
when the time is? For the Son of
Man taking a far journey, who left his
and gave authority to his Servants
every man his work, commanding
man, Watch ye therefore, for ye know
when the time is, for ye know not
master cometh? at Even, at midnight
the Cock crowing, least coming suddenly
finde you sleeping, and so cast you
there to remain with us without end.

From which the Lord Jesus
all, and that for his Mercies
alone. To whom be rendred
Honour, Glory, Praise, and
giving, now and for ever. A

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